

REPORT

ON

NATIVE PAPERS

FOR THE

Week ending the 5th March 1898.

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LIST OF NEWSPAPERS.

No.	Names of newspapers.	Place of publication.	Reported number of subscribers.	Dates of papers received and examined for the week.	REMARKS.
BENGALI.		CALCUTTA.			
<i>Weekly.</i>					
1	"Bangavasi" ...	Calcutta	20,000	26th February, 1898.	
2	"Basumati" ...	Ditto	.....	
3	"Hitaishi" ...	Ditto	800		
4	"Hitavadi" ...	Ditto	About 4,000	25th ditto.	
5	"Mihir-o-Sudhakar" ...	Ditto	1,250		
6	"Sahachar" ...	Ditto	About 500	23rd ditto.	
7	"Samay" ...	Ditto	3,000		
8	"Samutthan" ...	Ditto	.....	2nd March, 1898.	
9	"Sanjivani" ...	Ditto	3,000	26th February, 1898.	
10	"Som Prakash" ...	Ditto	800	28th ditto.	
11	"Sulabh Samachar" ...	Ditto	.....	26th ditto.	
<i>Daily.</i>					
1	"Banga Vidya Prakashika" ...	Ditto	300	25th and 28th February, and 3rd March, 1898.	
2	"Dainik-o-Samachar Chandrika." ...	Ditto	1,000	26th to 28th February and 2nd March, 1898.	
3	"Samvad Prabhakar" ...	Ditto	1,132	25th, 26th February and 1st to 3rd March, 1898.	
4	"Samvad Purnachandrodaya" ...	Ditto	200	25th, 26th and 28th February and 1st to 3rd March, 1898.	
5	"Sulabh Dainik" ...	Ditto	Read by 3,000		
HINDI.					
<i>Fortnightly.</i>					
1	"Marwari Gazette" ...	Ditto	.....	
<i>Weekly.</i>					
1	"Bharat Mitra" ...	Ditto	2,000	28th February, 1898.	
2	"Hindi Bangavasi" ...	Ditto	10,000	28th ditto.	
PERSIAN.					
<i>Weekly.</i>					
1	"Hablul Mateen" ...	Ditto	500	21st and 28th February, 1898.	
2	"Mefta-hur-safar" ...	Ditto	.....	15th February, 1898.	
URDU.					
<i>Weekly.</i>					
1	"Darussaltanat and Urdu Guide." ...	Ditto	310	17th and 25th February, 1898.	
2	"General and Gauhariassi" ...	Ditto	330		
<i>Tri-weekly.</i>					
1	"Nusrat-ul-Islam" ...	Ditto	.....	
<i>Daily.</i>					
1	"Rozanæ Kalkatta" ...	Ditto	.....	26th and 27th February and 1st to 3rd March, 1898.	
BENGALI.		BURDWAN DIVISION.			
<i>Fortnightly.</i>					
1	"Pallivasi" ...	Kalna	.....	
<i>Weekly.</i>					
1	"Banadur Darpan" ...	Bankura	500	1st March 1898.	
2	"Burdwan Sanjivani" ...	Burdwan	250	22nd February, 1898.	
3	"Chinsura Vartavaha" ...	Chinsura	620	20th and 27th ditto.	
4	"Education Gazette" ...	Hooghly	1,380	25th ditto.	
BENGALI.		PRESIDENCY DIVISION.			
<i>Weekly.</i>					
1	"Murshidabad Hitaishi" ...	Murshidabad	696	23rd February, 1898.	
2	"Pratihar" ...	Ditto	603	25th ditto	

No.	Names of Newspapers.	Place of publication.	Reported number of subscribers.	Dates of papers received and examined for the week.	REMARKS.
	URIYA.	ORISSA DIVISION.			
	<i>Weekly.</i>				
1	"Sambalpur Hitaishini" ...	Bamra in the Central Provinces.	.....		This paper is said to have some circulation in the Division, but the number of subscribers could not be ascertained.
2	"Samvad Vahika" ...	Balasore ...	190		
3	"Uriya and Navasamvad" ...	Ditto ...	309		
4	"Utkal Dipika" ...	Cuttack ...	480		
	HINDI.	PATNA DIVISION.			
	<i>Monthly.</i>				
1	"Bihar Bandhu" ...	Bankipur ...	About 600	20th February, 1898.	
	<i>Weekly.</i>				
1	"Aryavarta" ...	Dinapur ...	1,000		
	URDU.				
	<i>Weekly.</i>				
1	"Al Punch" ...	Bankipur ...	500	18th and 28th February, 1898.	
2	"Gaya Punch" ...	Gaya ...	400		
	BENGALI.	BHAGALPUR DIVISION.			
	<i>Fortnightly.</i>				
1	"Gaur Varta" ...	Malda ...	.....	
	BENGALI.	RAJSHAHI DIVISION.			
	<i>Weekly.</i>				
1	"Hindu Ranjika" ...	Boalia, Rajshahi ...	243	This paper is not regularly published, for want of type.	
2	"Rangpur Dikprakash" ...	Kakina, Rangpur ...	180		
	HINDI.				
	<i>Monthly.</i>				
1	"Darjeeling Mission ke Masih Samachar Patrika."	Darjeeling ...	700		
	BENGALI.	DACCA DIVISION.			
	<i>Fortnightly.</i>				
1	"Faridpur Hitaishini" ...	Faridpur ...	.....	26th February, 1898.	
2	"Kasipur Nivasi" ...	Kasipur, Barisal ...	316		
	<i>Weekly.</i>				
1	"Barisal Hitaishi" ...	Barisal ...	.....	21st February, 1898. 27th ditto. 25th ditto. 26th ditto.	
2	"Charu Mihir" ...	Mymensingh ...	900		
3	"Dacca Prakash" ...	Dacca ...	2,400		
4	"Sanjay" ...	Faridpur ...	.....	
5	"Saraswat Patra" ...	Dacca ...	About 500		
	ENGLISH AND BENGALI.				
	<i>Weekly.</i>				
1	"Dacca Gazette" ...	Dacca ...	500	28th ditto.	
	BENGALI.	CHITTAGONG DIVISION.			
	<i>Fortnightly.</i>				
1	"Tripura Hitaishi" ...	Comilla ...	.....	2nd fortnight Magh, 1304 B.S.	
	<i>Weekly.</i>				
1	"Jyoti" ...	Chittagong ...	.....	23rd February, 1898.	
2	"Sansodhini" ...	Ditto ...	120		
	BENGALI.	ASSAM.			
1	"Paridarshak-o-Srihattavasi" ...	Sylhet ...	.....	1st fortnight February, 1898.	
2	"Silchar" ...	Silchar, Cachar ...	.....	

I.—FOREIGN POLITICS.

Al Punch of the 18th February says that the Afridis are a peculiarly obstinate people. They will perish rather than submit to the British. The Government treated them leniently, and that made them bolder. We presumed that Sir William Lockhart's presence in the campaign would overawe them, but the recent fighting at Ali Musjid shows that they are still fighting obstinately. It seems that they have turned mad. But they ought to know that the time is fast approaching when they will not be forgiven for the mischief they are doing. They should not think that by killing Lieutenant Hammond, a lame man that he was, they have become victorious. If they do not soon submit, they will see streams of blood flowing through their country and the worst time they have yet passed through.

AL PUNCH,
Feb. 18th, 1898.

II.—HOME ADMINISTRATION.

(a)—Police.

2. A Raniganj correspondent writes to the *Burdwan Sanjivani* of the 22nd February to say that on the night of the 18th idem, there was a daring dacoity at Amrash-ota *chati* on the Grand Trunk road near Searsole. The dacoits, who are alleged to have been either Beharis or up-country men, decamped with much booty after assailing the villagers mercilessly. It is said that they first set fire to a haystack.

BURDWAN SANJIVANI,
Feb. 22nd, 1898.

3. A "Musalman" writes to the *Sanjay* of the 25th February complaining of the establishment of a slaughter-house at Maguradangi, thana Pangsa, in the district of Faridpur, and the evil effects thereof on the sanitation of the village. One Etbar Fakir has acquired a permission for cow-slaughter from certain residents of the village by the payment of Rs. 3 per mensem, and has since been slaughtering seven or eight moribund cows every day not for the sale of meat, but of the hide, leaving the offals, &c., to take care of themselves as best they can. The result is the whole village is oppressed with a noxious stench and foul atmosphere, giving rise to fell epidemics like cholera, which last season carried off 150 to 200 victims within the radius of half a mile. It is expected, says the correspondent, that the District Magistrate of Faridpur will restrain Etbar Fakir from slaughtering cows in the village and exposing the offals, &c., in the open to the detriment of the public health.

SANJAY,
Feb. 25th, 1898.

4. The same paper says that the police officers of thana Bhushna, in the district of Faridpur, are forcibly removing the traps and tackle of fishermen from the Kumarnad and Champadaha Beel, which according to immemorial custom had been set there, leaving, of course, sufficient space for the passage of boats and which is not likely to foul the water, as neither the Kumarnad nor the Champadaha Beel is shallow or small in area. The action of the police in this connection is also reprehensible from the point of view of the owner. The fishermen will not pay their rent unless they are allowed to set their traps, &c., and make profit out of the fishing.

SANJAY.

5. The *Som Prakash* of the 28th February says that while the dacoity which was some time ago committed in Jayrampur within the jurisdiction of the Panchla thana in the Howrah district remains yet untraced, a fresh attempt was made by some dacoits on the house of Babu Bihari Lal Ghosh of Sulati within the jurisdiction of the Sankrail thana in the same district. That the dacoits should be so bold as to enter a village near which the Sub-Inspector of the Panchla thana is stopping, is not very creditable to the police. Within the last six months dacoities have been committed not only at Jayrampur, but also at Dhulaguri. It is time that something were done to apprehend the dacoits.

SOM PRAKASH,
Feb. 28th, 1898.

(b)—Working of the Courts.

CHARU MIHIR,
Feb. 21st, 1898.

6. Referring to a case in the Mymensingh sessions in which the jury hesitated to return a formal verdict of "not guilty" in spite of the clear direction of the Judge to that effect, the *Charu Mihir* of the 21st February observes that sufficient care is not taken in preparing jury lists for the Mymensingh district. It is not, of course, desirable that the jury should acquit prisoners right and left, but it is certainly a great pity that they should hesitate to declare a person "not guilty" even when they are directed by the Judge to do so. In the Mymensingh district a failure of justice not infrequently takes place owing to incompetent men being empannelled on a jury. The Mymensingh jurors are so incompetent and dull-headed that many of them have been known to draw lots in order to determine whether a prisoner was guilty or not. This state of things should not be tolerated any longer, and the charge to the jury should be put down to writing before it is delivered.

CHARU MIHIR.

7. The same paper complains that the District Judge of Mymensingh is putting the public to great inconvenience by holding court in his private residence. Cases are often postponed to the great trouble and cost of the litigants.

CHARU MIHIR.

8. The same paper complains that the record-of-right suits in Mymensingh are invariably decided in favour of zamindars owing, it is alleged, to the court being too engrossed with the trial of criminal cases to pay sufficient attention to these suits. The *amla* in charge of the record-of-right department has been in his post for a long time to the great prejudice of the administration of justice. He should be transferred without further delay.

HITAVADI,
Feb. 25th, 1898.

9. The *Hitavadi* of the 25th February learns from a correspondent that Maulvi Fazlal Karim is impressing people even at Munshiganj. Lately the police impressed a respectable Musalman raiyat to row the Maulvi's boat. The man having been rescued by some fellow-villagers, the police came back in great force and began belabouring him. This led to a regular affray between the police and the villagers. An enquiry should be made into the true cause of this affray.

HITAVADI.

10. The same paper learns from another correspondent that on the 18th February last the Subdivisional Officer of Kalna while riding out knocked down and hurt an old woman and rode on without taking any notice of her.

FARIDPUR
HITASHINI,
Feb. 26th, 1898.

11. Speaking of the exorbitant fees charged by the Collector's *amla* for the realisation of road-cess arrears, which sometimes amount to five or ten times the original cess, the *Faridpur Hitaishini* of the 26th February says that these fees are generally realised first, while cases have been known in which the Government demand has remained altogether unrealised. In view of the wretched condition of crops during the last decade or so, many properties will possibly change hands if in addition to the Government demands they are burdened with such exorbitant fees. In this connection it is said that the pound and ferry demands are realised by the District Boards at less cost and with less hardship. The District Magistrate is asked to see if some similar mode of road-cess realisation be not possible.

Another grievance in connection with road-cess is that in cases where there are many joint proprietors of the same estate, the present system of realisation of arrears by the attachment of the movable properties of the owners tells heavily on some co-sharers and allow others by reason of their absence, &c., to escape. Such being the case, it would be much better if the notice of attachment were to issue against the estate and not against the movable properties of the owners.

SOM PRAKASH,
Feb. 28th, 1898.

12. The *Som Prakash* of the 28th February asks the Government to make it a rule not to give judicial powers to, or place in charge of a subdivision, any European officer who does not thoroughly understand the languages of

the people. Failure of justice due to bias, misinterpretation of facts, or an incompetent knowledge of the law may be remedied by the higher courts, but there is no way to remedy the failure of justice which results from a Magistrate's inability to understand the tongue, and appreciate the manners and customs of the people. The vernacular examination which the Government requires most European officers in its service to pass, is a mere farce; officers who have successfully passed that examination being often found to betray a sad ignorance of the vernaculars in their every-day work. The writer knows of a European officer in charge of an important subdivision in this province who is completely innocent of any knowledge of Bengali. The misinterpretations given in bad and faulty English, by his peshkar and the one or two English-knowing mukhtars practising in his court are the sole means by which he has to gather what is said by the parties and their witnesses in their depositions. It is hoped that Sir Alexander Mackenzie will remedy this state of things.

13. Speaking of the fine imposed on the nazir by the Magistrate of Dacca for wrongly entering the hour of attendance in the attendance register, the *Samutthan* of the 2nd March observes that though it was wrong on the nazir's part to falsely note the hour of attendance, yet it must be said that when clerks in Government service in the mufassal have no fixed hours for leaving office and have almost always to work eight or nine hours in office every day and to take work home, and when the superior officers scarcely attend at 11 a little late attendance on the part of the clerks might be overlooked. Considering that the Government has enacted a law fixing the number of hours mill operatives have to work, it is to be expected that it will fix hours of attendance for its clerks and other employes in the mufassal, and make some arrangement for extra payment if these men have to work beyond those hours.

SAMUTTHAN,
March 2nd, 1898.

(c)—Jails.

14. The *Dacca Prakash* of the 27th February has the following:—

Jail administration in Bengal. The last annual report on the administration of jails in Bengal shows an increase in the number of jail inmates. Owing to a defective criminal law, the number of offenders as well as the number of prisoners are on the increase. The Government ascribes this increase to the prevalence of famine in the country last year. We do not contradict this, but we believe that there must be another circumstance to which this increase should be attributed. It appears from an examination of the jail statistics given in the report that the increase in the jail population was most marked in those districts in which the severity of the distress was least felt. The largest increase was in Calcutta and Darjeeling, where there was very little distress, and the smallest increase was in Monghyr and Darbhanga, where famine raged most violently. How are you to solve this sad paradox? In our opinion the propagation of Christianity is at the root of this increase in the jail population. Calcutta and Darjeeling are the strongholds of Christianity and English education, and crime is most prevalent in these two places. In Dinajpur and other backward districts, on the other hand, which have not yet been invaded by English education and Christianity, crime was at its lowest ebb. In Dinajpur, for instance, the ratio borne by the jail to the general population was .22 per thousand, whereas in Calcutta and Darjeeling it was so high as 2.97 per thousand. What an astounding revelation!

DACCA PRAKASH,
Feb. 27th, 1898.

It is clear from the report that crime is diminishing among the agricultural classes. This means not that the agricultural classes are ceasing from the commission of crime, but that with the spread of education the children of the agriculturists are swelling the ranks of the educated classes among whom crime is on the increase.

The Government expresses its satisfaction at the decrease in jail mortality. The number of deaths per thousand among the jail population fell from 67.3, the figures for the period before 1853, to 28.7 in 1896. This is no doubt a matter for congratulation; but our satisfaction diminishes when we take one fact into consideration. Let the Government compare jail mortality with mortality outside the jail, and it will at once realise that owing to defects in

the jail administration hundreds are still being mercilessly killed. Owing to the famine last year, there was a specially heavy mortality outside the jail, namely 34·17 per thousand. It is, however, to be remembered that among the general population the number of deaths is the largest among children below five years. Last year the number of deaths among children below one year was 195·5 per thousand, and the number of deaths among children below five years was 40·81. The number of deaths among adults above 30 and below 40 was only 19·13 per thousand against 28·7 per thousand among the jail population of about the same age. Children do not go to jail; the jail population consists of able-bodied and healthy adults, and the high rate of mortality among these people in jails shows that our jail administration is yet very far from being satisfactory.

There is another fact to be taken into consideration in connection with our jail administration. It appears from the report that the rate of mortality was the highest among short-term prisoners. This is as much as to say that the short-term prisoners are put to very great hardship which they cannot bear. Instead of putting the short-term prisoners to such cruel treatment it will be much better to hang them, and thereby relieve them from all misery. It is said that Mr. Chalmers is a member of the Howard Association, and it will be a pity if he does not take any steps to save the short-term prisoners from the cruel rigour and indescribable hardship to which they have at present to submit themselves.

(d)—Education.

PRATIKAR,
Feb. 25th, 1898.

15. The *Pratihar* of the 25th February deplors the want of "B" course classes in the Berhampore College, though a proposal was made to establish such classes some two years back. The reason of the scheme falling through is said to be a paucity of professors to teach the subjects, although the cost incurred in the maintenance of the college is by no means much behind what the first class private colleges in Calcutta have to find. Thus, though virtually the cost of the "Arts" course in Berhampore College must be said to exceed that in Calcutta colleges, the examination results do not bear the same analogy. In ten years only four candidates obtained honours in the B. A. examination from the Berhampore College. On the other hand, it is training in Western science and in Mathematics which is most important to the Indians, and hence, the sooner the Board of Trustees find their way to opening "B" course classes the better for all parties concerned.

HITAVADI,
Feb. 25th, 1897.

16. The *Hitavadi* of the 25th February refers to the refusal by the late Pandit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar of a seat on the Central Text-Book Committee. Central Text-Book Committee on the ground of his being himself an author of school-books, and remarks that this noble example must have been lost on the present members of the Committee. Most of the present members have turned authors with their appointment to the committee, and thus found a way of earning money. Many of them have also paved the way for their relatives turning writers of school-books. This is not all. No sooner had Vidyasagar died than the members of the Revision Committee rejected the best school-book from the list to make room for the *Nutan Path*. Are the members lost to all sense of righteousness that they do not scruple to pass off tinsel for gold from selfish considerations?

SANJIVANI,
Feb. 26th, 1898.

17. The *Sanjivani* of the 26th February contradicts the statement made in its columns about an alleged passage-at-arms between Messrs. Rowe and Percival of the Presidency College (R. N. P. for the week ending 26th February, paragraph 18), and regrets that such an unfounded rumour crept in.

DACCA PRAKASH,
Feb. 27th, 1898.

18. The *Dacca Prakash* of the 27th February is surprised to learn that Dr. Martin, Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, has recognised the new Dacca Saraswat Samaj as the true Saraswat Samaj. It is a great pity that the Director should have recognised a society which has not been recognised by the local authorities. It does not behove the Government to take the side of any party in a quarrel or a *daladahi* among *pandits*. It is only very lately that the Government has

come to have a connection with the *pandits*, and it is certainly undesirable that it should take advantage of that connection and interfere in these affairs.

The Sanskrit title examinations in connection with the old Saraswat Samaj were this year conducted by an Inspector of Schools. This was all right, but it was certainly objectionable for the Government to have permitted the new Samaj to hold examinations. The cause of Sanskrit learning is sure to suffer, and the value of the examinations is sure to deteriorate if the Government allows itself to take a part in the *daladali* of the *pandits*.

19. The *Som Prakash* of the 28th February is anxious to know the name of the Professor of Sanskrit in the Presidency College who, according to a correspondent of the *Indian Mirror*, takes pains to convince his Hindu pupils that the *Puranas* are not Sastras, and that many of the gods and goddesses now worshipped by the Hindus ought not to be worshipped by them.

SOM PRAKASH,
Feb. 28th, 1898.

Un-Hindu teaching by a Professor of the Presidency College.

(e)—Local Self-Government and Municipal Administration.

20. The *Chinsura Vartavaha* of the 20th February has the following:—

The new assessments in the Hooghly-Chinsura Municipality.

It is difficult to say whether the rate-payers will be able to bear the heavy increase of taxation which has been effected in the Hooghly-Chinsura Municipality. The rates have been increased by twenty thousand rupees only by a re-assessment. The strangest part of the affair is that no part of the increase has fallen on the shoulders either of the rich or of those who are in any way connected with the Municipality, but the whole of it will have to be borne by poor people and non-resident owners of property. The appeals committee, which is hearing objections, is composed of inexperienced young men, and all that they are doing is to slightly reduce the assessments only in cases in which the assessee can bring letters of recommendation from influential persons.

CHINSURA
VARTAVAHA,
Feb. 20th, 1898.

21. A Raniganj correspondent writes to the *Burdwan Sanjivani* of the 22nd February to complain of the scant courtesy shown to a representation of the people by the Municipal authorities. It is said that a meeting of the Municipal Corporation was to be held on the 16th February, under the presidency of the Vice-Chairman, in the absence of the Chairman, to prepare the budget. On the previous day a large number of residents and taxpayers submitted a petition at the Municipal office at noon in connection with the budget. The Vice-Chairman did not open the envelope, which happened to be addressed to the Chairman, although it was plainly written on the cover what its contents were. The representation was not, therefore, placed before the meeting, although the Chairman subsequently disposed it off by saying it was too late. In submitting the budget to the District Collector and Divisional Commissioner, what the Municipal authorities should have done was to enquire into the grievances of the rate-payers and consult them about the budget.

BURDWAN SANJIVANI,
Feb. 22nd, 1898.

Grievances of Raniganj rate-payers.

22. In noticing the letter of a Dacca correspondent to the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, the *Sanjivani* of the 26th February says:—

Dacca municipal matters and the Langalbandh mela.

The Magistrate of Dacca is said to be anxious to provide for a European by getting the dismissal of Babu Uma Kanta Ghosh, an employé of the Municipal Corporation, who has been discharging his duties to the satisfaction of the public for seven or eight years now.

SANJIVANI,
Feb. 26th, 1898.

The correspondent makes another allegation against the Magistrate. Langalbandh, in Narainganj subdivision, is a sacred place of the Hindus, resorted to annually by thousands of pilgrims from all parts of the country. At this place a *mela* is held on the *Astami Snan* day which was hitherto supervised and controlled by the Chairman of the Narainganj Local Board, who did the work so satisfactorily as to win the approbation of the authorities on more occasions than one. This year, however, the District Magistrate of Dacca has, of his own motion, taken the management of the *mela* in his own hands, and called upon the neighbouring zamindars to subscribe Rs. 3,000 to the *mela* fund, saying that otherwise he will not allow it to be held. Ere this no one had ever to pay a farthing of this special impost, which they are now required to

pay. Thousands are expected to flock to Langalbandh on the appointed day to have a dip in the Brahmaputra, and if the *mela* be not held this year, owing to the natural and justifiable remissness of the zamindars, with what a heavy heart and despondent spirits would these thousands have to return home. It is not clear why the Magistrate is so anxious to change the old order of things. If the zamindars derived any income from the *mela*, surely they might contribute something towards the cost of making sanitary arrangements, otherwise why should they? In that case the sanitation of the place should be the look-out of either the Government or the District or the Local Board.

(g)—*Railways and communications, including canals and irrigation.*

CHINSURA
VARTAVAHA,
Feb. 20th, 1898.

23. The *Chinsura Vartavaha* of the 20th February considers the monthly fare of Rs. 9 for a daily passenger between Telkal Ghat and Janai on the Howrah-Sheakhala Tramway a little excessive, especially when it is considered that such passengers will have to spend one rupee more every month on the ferry between Howrah and Calcutta. The fare should be reduced so as not to exceed Rs. 7, inclusive of ferry charge. Inconvenience is also felt on this line in consequence of there being no arrangement for the issue of return tickets to intermediate class passengers.

ANSODHINI,
Feb. 23rd, 1898.

24. In the *Sansodhini* of the 23rd February, a correspondent gives his personal experience of the treatment received by passengers on the newly-opened Assam-Bengal Railway. On the 11th February a party of gentlemen came to Chittagong station, but were not allowed to come in without tickets by the door-keeper. As the booking-clerk was, however, absent, no tickets could be purchased, while a few short minutes remained to the starting of the train. At this juncture an old gentleman interested himself in the passengers and sent the porter to call up the booking-clerk. But as the latter did not still appear, he asked the passengers to get into the train, adding that he would see that they were not made to pay double fare. His advice was acted upon, and the passengers after booking their luggage found what accommodation they could in the train and the compartments began to be locked. When only three minutes remained to the starting of the train, a voice called out from the platform that passengers who had no tickets might now book themselves, as the booking-clerk had at last arrived. Some alighted from the train at this summons and went to the booking-office, but the clerk, who attended on them, knew hardly what he was about, and could not book tickets with the ease and despatch which mark efficient officers. The result was that the train started, and many passengers were left behind, one of whom had alighted from the train to purchase tickets for ten others who were in the train. To prevent these men being handed over to the police, he had to send a telegraphic message to the station of destination.

On the day previous a well-known member of the Comilla Bar was travelling from Chittagong to Comilla. He had a second class return ticket, and went up to the only second class compartment in the train which was filled with several European employes of the railway and their female friends. He was refused admission, and on reference to the assistant station master was asked by him to travel first class, as there was no accommodation for him in the second class. This, however, was not liked by the station master, who directed his assistant to make the pleader change his second class ticket for a third class one, and travel in that class. The passenger would not give in, and when pestered again and again, threatened to report the station master, which brought the latter to his senses. The Gurkha gate-keeper is at the same time charged with rudeness and occasional assaults on passengers and is said to be an exact counterpart of his superiors in this respect.

SANJAY,
Feb. 25th, 1898.

25. The country-boat, says the *Sanjay* of the 25th February, which plies between the steamer and the shore at Tepakhola Ghat, Faridpur, has scarcely any shed, the little cabin on board being exclusively reserved for the station master. Great are, therefore, the sufferings of the passengers who leave the ghat by this boat at noon and have to board the steamer on a *chur* in the

Padma, five to six miles off, at 8 or 9 P.M. What is very urgently wanted are a waiting-room at Tepakhola Ghat and a covered boat for the conveyance of passengers to and from the steamer.

26. The *Faridpur Hitaishini* of the 26th February complains of the want of passable roads in many parts of the district; among others in Sadarpur, Bhanga, Gopalganj, Kotalipara, Kashiani, Maksudpur, and Ayinpur.

Want of roads and communication in Faridpur.

FARIDPUR
HITAISHINI,
Feb. 26th, 1898.

It is said that though the people of these places have been paying the road-cess for about a quarter of a century, they have derived no benefit whatever in return. Then there is no road leading into Faridpur from the south and south-east, and hence neither men nor grains can come into the district town, while the Talma road having been partly swallowed up by the Padma, people have now to walk over the *chur* in the Dhol Samudra as best they can. If a canal were cut on the Madhumati side, about one and-a-half miles at Purapara and about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile near Jelbari, there would be water communication with Rupapat, Baluga, Bathandanga, Gopalganj, and the Madhumati, thus contributing to the importance of Faridpur as an important trade centre.

(h)—General.

27. The *Chinsura Vartavaha* of the 20th February draws the attention of the Postal Superintendent of Hooghly to the heavy increase of work in the Janai Post Office in that district and to the necessity of sanctioning a proportionate increase in the number of men attached to that office.

A postal complaint.

CHINSURA
VARTAVAHA,
Feb. 20th, 1898.

28. The Magistrate or the Commissioner, writes the *Dainik-o-Samachar Chandrika* of the 27th February, can, and often does, in exercise even of his executive powers, interfere with the judicial independence of a Deputy or a Joint Magistrate. This not infrequently leads to failure of justice. A separation of the executive and judicial functions is desirable on this ground, and an attempt, though so far fruitless, is being made to bring about such separation. The Indian administration is at present being carried on on retrograde lines, and as a proof of this you have the recent measures for the amendment of the criminal law of the country. The powers of the executive are being gradually increased at the cost of the judiciary. The Government is in this respect evidently being guided by the policy of Uncle Jadu of the Indian story, who, when his wife died from snake-bite, provided himself with four wives simply to spite the snake. The Government is increasing the powers of the executive evidently to spite the Congress which is trying to have those powers curtailed.

The union of judicial and executive functions.

DAINIK-O-SAMACHAR
CHANDRIKA,
Feb. 27th, 1898.

29. The *Som Prakash* of the 28th February asks why complaints of grievances and oppressions which are made in the vernacular press do not receive that prompt attention at the hands of the authorities which they do if published in Anglo-Indian newspapers. This must be due to one of two reasons, namely, either that the authorities do not place that credence in the writings of the native press which they do in those of the English press, or that those who are entrusted by Government with the translation of the native newspapers do not properly do their duty, leaving out much that ought to be translated, or submitting their translations a long time after the originals are published.

Government and the native press.

SOM PRAKASH,
Feb. 28th, 1898.

III.—LEGISLATIVE.

30. The *Charu Mihir* of the 21st February writes as follows with reference to the passing of the Sedition Bill:—

Passing of the Sedition Bill.

CHARU MIHIR,
Feb. 21st, 1898.

There is no use pointing out the slight difference between the Sedition Act and the Sedition Bill as it was originally drafted. We have now been placed in the dark cell of politics, and we do not know where we are. There is no use concealing the fact that the power of the press is being curtailed. He alone knows how far he is consulting our interests who holds in his hands the thread of three hundred millions of lives. As for ourselves, we cannot see far ahead.

The section in the Criminal Procedure Bill relating to sedition will most likely be passed with a slight modification, and that will fill the cup to the brim. But the loyal subject need not fear. The offence of sedition has been defined somewhat clearly, and we shall now know what is sedition in the eye of the rulers and what is not. The loyal journalist need not therefore fear. Let him eschew politics, and he will never run the risk of trespassing upon that debatable ground which divides light from darkness.

We are glad that the Secretary of State is well disposed towards the native press. The Viceroy has also assured us that once the irritation and panic of the moment is gone, the public will be able to look at the new law from a dispassionate point of view. We cannot, however, say how far this assurance will allay this anxiety of the native press.

BURDWAN
SANJIVANI,
Feb. 22nd, 1898.

31. The *Burdwan Sanjivani* of the 22nd February says:—

The Seditious Law.

The Seditious Law has now been passed. What its effects will be the future alone will show. That it would be passed, we knew before. His Excellency the Viceroy has said that the prime object of the Government is to perpetuate English rule in India, and to put an effective check on all attempts for its subversion. This is no doubt true, but the point is, the Government has failed to understand that no one in India does desire such subversion. It is perhaps owing to this wrong impression that the Bill has been passed in spite of universal protest.

Mr. Chalmers distinctly said that what they wanted was not to stop any abuse of Government, but the spread of a feeling of disaffection or rebellion, for the latter was likely to prove dangerous to the State. Really this is exactly what should be done; and Government should not take any cognisance of what is beneath contempt. But Government could not stick to this principle. What is the new law for—for the protection of the people or for the check of any abuse of Government?

SAHACHAR,
Feb. 23rd, 1898.

32. The *Sahachar* of the 23rd February says:—

The Seditious Law.

Lord Elgin's speech on the Seditious Bill was marked by patience, gravity and calmness. The gist of his observations was that a little calm reflection would tell the public that the Bill was not really so objectionable as it was at first supposed.

What we have respectfully to urge in this connection is that a short postponement might have disabused the public mind of the erroneous impression referred to by the Viceroy before the Bill was passed into law. It would, therefore, have been better if the enactment had been delayed a few days. We have been very sorry to read Sir Alexander Mackenzie's speech on the occasion in which he gave expression to his feeling of displeasure against the educated Bengali. We regard and respect him as a kind and able Governor, and that is why we are sorry to note the state of his feelings towards the educated Bengalis. It is to be hoped that the educated community will arrange for the moral education of their sons and grandsons with a view to removing this impression of the Europeans. The protests entered by different communities have proved unavailing. Of course, it is with the best of intentions that the Government has thought fit to pass the Bill. We, however, very respectfully submit that it would have been better if the Bill had not been passed.

MURSHIDABAD
HITAISHI,
Feb. 23rd, 1898.

33. Speaking of the discussion on the Seditious Bill in the Supreme

Sir Alexander Mackenzie on Bengali newspapers.

Legislative Council, the *Murshidabad Hitaishi* of the 23rd February, says that it was expected the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal would express himself on the lines of His Excellency the Viceroy, but unfortunately His Honour took a different course altogether, and charged the vernacular papers with many sins of omission and commission. Had arrangements been made for the suppression of all the vernacular papers every difficulty would have been overcome.

SAMVAD PRABHAKAR,
Feb. 25th, 1898.

34. The *Samvad Prabhakar* of the 25th February has the following:—

The Seditious Law.

The Seditious Bill has been passed and the people of the whole country have been agitated; the newspaper editors, in particular, being very much alarmed. Many people, however, have not yet lost heart. There is, in fact, no reason why we should

become dispirited. Our rulers have made a law, and as subjects we should obey that law in the discharge of our duties.

It is true the protest against the 'Bill bore no fruit. But that does not argue that our rulers will never listen to us. We fully hope that by keeping within the limits of truth and justice in the discharge of our duties, we shall be able some day or other to convince our rulers that a sedition law is unnecessary for this country.

35. "Why are you so anxious, so thoughtful," asks the *Sanjay* of the 25th February, "it is for your good that the Sedition Law has been passed. Those who govern

SANJAY,
Feb. 25th, 1898.

the country cannot but desire its welfare, nor should they do otherwise. We neither want the empire nor its administration, all that we care about is to live in peace and contentment, in safety and without any difficulties. If we get peace we want nothing else.

We accept the line of argument adopted in support of the measure as judicious and essential, for what else is possible for us when it is the command of the Government? And we are glad to note the following words of assurance that fell from the lips of Lord Elgin: 'Some of the feelings which, I think, have been unduly excited, may subside.' True, whenever a new law comes to be passed some sensation is created not only in barbarous, but in civilised communities as well, and this sensation is indeed excusable.

The stain of partiality has been removed from the present law. The Press Act of 1878 was meant only for the vernacular papers, but this time, this invidious distinction has been removed and all are to fare alike, vernacular or English, native or Anglo-Indian. The original Bill as presented by Mr. Chalmers to the Council would have perhaps given cause for apprehension, but in its passage through the Select Committee it has undergone such modifications as have given us great relief.

In conclusion, we pray to heaven that our rulers may always govern the country with patience, forbearance, and consideration.

36. Referring to the Sedition Law the *Pratikar* of the 25th February says:—

PRATIKAR,
Feb. 25th, 1898.

Laws and regulations are made and enforced at the desire of the rulers; and the subjects are bound to obey them. Our civilised rulers, the free and liberty-loving Englishmen, have kindly allowed us to speak out our minds, which surely we could not have done if there had been a law from the first making it penal to criticise the actions and measures of Government. Even now His Excellency the Viceroy has repeatedly assured us that unless our writings be found to show ill-will towards Government we shall not be harmed in the least. We, too, are not of opinion that the native press will be effectually gagged by the enactment of the measure. Whether or no the words the use of which resulted in the conviction of Mr. Tilak and the editors of the *Modavritta* and the *Pratod*, were ever used by others—is a point which has not been clearly established; nor has it been proved that they were really seditious. Yet in the cases noted above the law as it stood was thought applicable and convictions were secured. So in respect of the new measure, it will no doubt be applied with all vigour whenever it will so please the authorities. We have nothing more to say in this connection. The orders of the Government will be obeyed.

The writer concludes by saying that whenever a new Bill is introduced in the Council it is translated in the different vernaculars and made known to the public. But so far as we know, this procedure has not been followed in this particular case. Now, of course, every one will come to know of the law.

37. The *Hitavadi* of the 25th February has the following:—

HITAVADI,
Feb. 25th, 1898.

"What I thought of has not come to pass, and a fate has befallen me of which I never dreamt. I was to have been a king next morning, but instead of this I now go to the forests in the guise of a hermit with matted hair"—such were the thoughts of Ram at the time of going to the forest, and thoughts similar to them are passing through our minds at the passing of the Sedition Law.

The Sedition Bill became law on Friday last. The protest of the natives, the protest of the Europeans, the protest of the press, and the protest of the legal profession have all proved unavailing. The officials listened to nobody,

deemed no protest worth considering, and knew no rest till they had gained their point. The current of the stream of amendment was so strong and impetuous that we feared from the first that it would sweep away all patience, endurance, argument, and protest. It is now clear that this was no idle fear. What more shall we say or write? The true freedom of speech and writing is now really gone. The proceedings of the officials make one suspect that it was under the influence of extreme prejudice and groundless suspicion and only from a wish to carry out their point that they passed the new law. The more numerous were the protests that poured in from all quarters, the stronger became the *zid* of the authorities. In every civilised country on the globe the protest of the people is heeded by the Government. At any rate every civilised Government calmly considers for a time whether it would not be proper to listen to the people's protest. But our officials have this time acted in a spirit the very reverse of this. Feeling it unnecessary to wait and calmly consider the matter, they did not rest till they had passed the law. The proceedings of the Council were continued even after nightfall, so that nothing might be reserved for consideration at its next sitting. No one could understand the reason of this hurry, and no one wasted time to understand or explain it. No one considered that we were restless with fear at the prospect of the passing of a dreadful law. We do not know whether to laugh or to weep at this, and we are perfectly bewildered. We shall no longer be able to say anything. However deep the loyalty in the heart and however strong the attachment to the sovereign and the administration, the right of speaking out one's mind has been in a manner, if not explicitly, taken away.

We are not inclined to believe that the authorities were in their right senses when they passed this law, or none of them would have found it in their hearts to express their sentiments in the Council, in a haughty spirit and in pungent language. Some made their speeches in a manner which would lead one to suppose that they had lost all sense of responsibility. They seem to have completely forgotten at the time of speaking the dignity of their office and the high trust which is reposed in them. One of them said that Government does not "care a brass farthing" for the abuse to which it is treated. Does a display of such a defiant spirit in a polite gathering, in the Legislative Council, enhance prestige? What shall we say when our Lieutenant-Governor himself gave us a moral lecture by repeating the verses about the eagle? We are perfectly bewildered.

A perusal of the speeches made that day in the Viceregal Council leads us to believe that the legislators have viewed our proceedings with prejudiced eyes. They think that no newspaper in this country is loyal. But we do not believe that there is any newspaper editor here who does not realise what the people of India will have to suffer if disturbances take place in the country, the Government be subverted, and there be a prospect of a revolution. The officials certainly think otherwise, and that is why they have a wrong impression about the native press.

How should we find fault with the officials? One of the native members, too, supported this Sedition Law. The Hon'ble Pandit Suraj Kaul of the Punjab, a member who was nominated to the Council by Government, has glorified himself and his country by supporting the measure. He does not know English, and only graces the Council arrayed in an imposing garb. What can we expect him to do, but to cry "Victory to huzoor?" Our worthy members of Bengal are not much behind this worthy.

The Maharaja of Darbhanga and Babu Joygobinda Laha were at first on the side of the opponents of the Bill, but their courage failed them at the time of voting on the proposal to adjourn the consideration of the Bill. Joygobinda Babu is a Government nominee, but the Maharaja has many times represented the public. The backsliding of these two must be due to the climate of Bengal, and to the malignity of the stars to the reputation of the representatives and our well-being. We have nothing more to say.

Whatever the effect of their protest, we are under an eternal obligation to the Hon'ble Rao Bahadur Ananda Charlu, to the Hon'ble Rahimtula Sayani, the Hon'ble Pandit Bishambar Nath, and the Hon'ble Chitnavis. Such is the large-heartedness, fearlessness and moral courage which they have displayed by protesting against the measure to the last, that there can be no doubt that

their names will remain engraved for ever in letters of gold in the grateful memory of their countrymen.

38. The same paper writes as follows :—

The Lieutenant-Governor on the Sedition Law.

We were at first surprised to read the pungent language in which Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, expressed his opinion of native speakers and native newspaper editors at the time of supporting the Sedition Law. We are personally grateful to the Lieutenant-Governor. It is to him that we owe the remission of our sentence by several months on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee. No one should therefore think us so ungrateful as to be capable of taking any statement of his in bad part. We must, however, say, though with great sorrow, that the picture which he has drawn of this country is a distorted and over-coloured picture.

We heard that he had come back from England with recovered health. His speech on that day makes us think that though he may have recovered his physical health, his mind is not yet all right. We hoped that the Lieutenant-Governor would make his speech with the same calmness and dignity as was evinced by the Viceroy. But it is to be regretted that he forgot himself, and made such unwarrantable remarks on native newspaper editors in a stern manner and in pungent language. He has spoken as he has heard and as he thinks. We think and believe otherwise, and are therefore unable to appreciate his reasoning. Still, people would not have been so much pained if he had said what he had to say in a different manner.

It is doubtful whether there really exists in India such discontent as he fancies that he sees and such faithlessness as he has portrayed before the Council. We can understand that Government will not suddenly take every criticism for sedition. We can also well imagine that Government will not completely lose its patience when any criticism is somewhat pungent. Still, we cannot be reassured by the protection held out by the Lieutenant-Governor to honest criticism. There are some good reasons for our not feeling reassured. We must say with the Hon'ble Mr. Chitnavis :—

"The most hostile critic will not question the intention of the legislature, and yet, if the Bill be passed in its present form, the boldest of editors will feel that a sword is hanging over his head."

We grant that it is not reasonable to suppose that Government will unnecessarily prosecute any newspaper editor for sedition. But every act that Government does is not done by the Viceroy or the Lieutenant-Governor. Government has often to act in accordance with the views of subordinate officials. How can one feel sure, under these circumstances, that Government will never fall into an error? Whatever Sir Alexander may then declare by word of the mouth, people will not have the courage to criticise Government measures.

Nor can we believe that justice will be done in all cases in law courts. The Lieutenant-Governor says :—

"We must trust to the common sense and fairness of our judicial tribunals. The journalist must trust also to the common sense and dignity of the Government, which would only expose itself to well-merited ridicule, if it showed undue sensitiveness to fair criticism. Certainly it has not done so hitherto. It has treated with silent contempt the petty traitor whose sole object is to get notoriety and subscriptions, and those would-be patriots whose chief desire is to substitute themselves for the Government as by law established."

In the opinion of the Lieutenant-Governor the object of the new law is to keep people of this class in check. Be the object of the law what it may, who shall say what effect it will produce in practice? Did those who drafted the Act for the prevention of cruelty to animals ever think that any judicious and impartial Magistrate would punish under it a person for breaking a crab's legs? When the law is obscure even the most innocent people are ground down by oppression. In the absence of clear indications of what sedition means, what will constitute disaffection, and what kind of writing will be considered hostile and worthy of punishment, no one can feel at ease simply trusting to the good sense of the authorities.

Indeed, if a tide of discontent is really flowing in the country, it is idle to think of stemming it by means of force. Fear will only teach people to

HITAVADI,
Feb. 25th, 1899.

conceal their discontent and not to speak out their mind. But will that remove dissatisfaction from the country? There is another thing. It is not easy to decide whether an adverse criticism is fair or unfair. It is seen in literary criticism that the author of a condemned book does not hesitate to characterise the adverse criticism of his work as malicious and unfair. Not to speak of the author, there is sometimes difference of opinion on the point even among general readers. When such is the case in literature, it should be easy to imagine what the case will be in politics. How shall we believe that the officials when found fault with, will not consider such adverse criticism malicious? It is in human nature to regard adverse criticism as malicious. If an adverse criticism of official proceedings is at the same time made in pungent language and in a sarcastic vein, how can we help fearing that the officials will take it amiss? We are, therefore, of opinion that this new law has dealt a death-blow to true criticism, and has in a manner taken away the liberty of the press. Let not the Lieutenant-Governor suppose that this law will be permanent. If the Liberals ever again come into power, if a judicious and generous ruler like Lord Ripon is again sent out, a law like this will never remain on the statute-book. So long as that happy day does not come, we shall not be able to criticise fearlessly and independently. Whenever we say anything against the authorities, we shall be troubled by a fear of imprisonment or transportation. That is why we say that while the severe law has inspired us with fear, the Lieutenant-Governor's severe reproof has loosened our heart-strings. If the Lieutenant-Governor could have entered into our feelings he would never have made such a speech.

HITAVADI,
Feb. 25th, 1898.

39. The same paper publishes a cartoon in which a figure (representing a native editor) is represented as limping along a thorny ground with crutches under his arms, while a European (representing an Anglo-Indian editor) is shown sitting at his ease in a hammock hanging from a tree.

A cartoon.

A song in hints.

I am unable to set my foot on the ground. O mother Tara, (a name of Kali) where shall I stand and find rest? My feet are smarting with prick after prick and it is idle to hope to walk.

My way is beset with thorns. Those alone are at ease who are hanging. My courage is all gone, for I have not two heads to lose. My arms are tired with keeping myself aloft on my crutches. O mother, teach me what to do. I am suffering greatly on account of the law. How much more shall I speak out?

I am being deceived in all matters. I am weeping my eyes out. I would prefer peace to happiness. O mother, remove the pain of my soul.

I meet with angry looks at every step. Who will remove this grievance of mine? You are far away across the seas while we are crying to you in vain here.

How may ghosts shall we propitiate? How shall we have access to you? If we speak out they come to crush us. We have not even the liberty to weep.

There is no disaffection in this country. Let us inform you of our grievance. They start everywhere at visions seen by them in their dreams.

They want to have affection by force. They would extort reverence by means of blows and threats. There is not a trace of disaffection here, and they complain of a pain in the head where there is no head.

SANJIVANI,
Feb. 26th, 1898.

40. The *Sanjivani* of the 26th February takes exception to the statement of Mr. Chalmers that the protests against the Sedition Bill came not from the people of the whole country, but from a few important cities like Bombay and Madras. The majority of the Indian people are illiterate and have scarcely an opportunity to know even in February of a Bill introduced in December preceding. Indeed, if a Bill were introduced for the prohibition of the cultivation of land by raiyats, even then would they not protest unless the provisions of the Bill were clearly explained to them, when perhaps a crore of voices would unite to oppose the measure. The mass of the Indian subjects of Her Majesty have not heard of

The Sedition Law.

the Sedition Law nor is it probable that they will ever hear of it. Thus, the educated classes, whose number is very small indeed, can alone protest against any proposed legislation, and no wonder if the protest against the Sedition Bill came from the great cities. Speaking of Sir James Westland's speech the same paper observes:—

"We are not surprised to read Sir James's speech, but where was the necessity of his getting so very offended? It is the Government of India which has ruled that Associations and public bodies will have the right to address it on important questions. It was under this rule, then, that so many protests were submitted against the Sedition Bill, and it was hardly edifying to convert the Legislative Council into a stage by cutting jokes over these protests. Sir James declared that the public meeting at Calcutta had the support neither of the Europeans nor of the Muhammadans. But did he not read in the papers that Mr. Grey, lately Assistant Secretary, Bengal Legislative Department, spoke against the measure, and that the eminent barristers, Messrs. Pugh and Jackson, were there too? Did he not hear that many Muhammadan gentlemen were present at the meeting? His argument, it would seem, is that when all the seven lakhs of human beings who inhabit Calcutta were not present at the meeting, it was not a meeting of the citizens. Verily, when he is of this mind, as a citizen of Calcutta he ought to have been present at, or written to, the meeting to protest against the proceedings. Then, again, he says it was a meeting of barristers, vakils, and newspaper editors. If he had chosen to be frank he would have believed otherwise. Babu Satyendra Nath Tagore, c.s., late a Sessions Judge, Babu Rabindra Nath Tagore, Rai Amrita Nath Mitra Bahadur, were all there, and neither of them is a vakil, barrister or newspaper editor. Really it is a matter of relief and congratulation to us that he has not styled it a meeting of boys."

"Sir Alexander Mackenzie," says the same paper, referring to His Honour's speech on the occasion, "is a great favourite with the Bengalis and an object of their respect. Why, then, was Sir Alexander so unkind towards us? From the day of his accession to the *Musnud* of Bengal to the present we have never said anything which might be interpreted as showing the least disrespect towards him. What others might say we do not much care about, but why is he against us, whom we have ever regarded as a true friend of India? His words have pained us. From the expressions he made use of it would appear that Bengal was full of seditionists, who, to save their own skins, were making all this row. Now, Sir Alexander has been long in Bengal, and has mixed with Bengalis intimately, but it is to be regretted that he has not yet understood the Bengali character. Those who believe that we harbour the thought of subverting the empire either by force or stratagem, do not know us at all. But it is useless to speak of these things when even men like Sir Alexander Mackenzie do not believe in such protestations.

In his speech His Honour referred to the fable of the eagle, the jay, and the kite to create a laugh. We know that we are no better than jays and kites. But if the eagle had understood that the jays and kites never entertained the idea of occupying his nest, then perhaps there would not have been such *zid* to have the Bill passed into law. Be that as it may, it is a matter of great regret that Sir Alexander, who has been worshipped by the whole of Bengal, should have allowed himself to speak in this painful way.

41. On the occasion of the passing of the Sedition Bill, writes the *Dainik-o-Samachar Chandrika* of the 26th February, the official members of the Viceregal Legislative Council vilified the native press; the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal beating the other members hollow in this respect. His Honour made cutting remarks on native papers, and in order to make his remarks appear keener by contrast, he praised two and only two of them, viz., the *Indian Spectator* of Bombay and the *Indian Nation* of Calcutta. This official patting on the back has flattered the *Indian Nation*, but that paper ought to know that official praise is as valueless as official vilification. Almost all Viceroys, Governors, and Lieutenant-Governors are impatient of press criticism. The only honourable exception was Lord Bentinck, who read all newspapers and paid heed to grievances ventilated in them. As for newspaper vilification of Government, His Lordship used to treat it lightly. But rulers like Lord

Sir Alexander Mackenzie on Native Papers.

DAINIK-O-SAMACHAR
CHANDRIKA,
Feb. 26th, 1893.

Bentinck are few and far between. You get a Viceroy every five years, but you will not get a Bentinck in a hundred years. If Sir Alexander Mackenzie could patiently bear newspaper criticism, he would become a Bentinck. Kristo Das Pal knew the true value of official praise and vilification and he did not, therefore, allow himself to be swayed by either.

SARASWAT PATRA,
Feb. 26th, 1898.

42. The *Saraswat Patra* of the 26th February has the following with reference to the passing of the Sedition Bill:—

The passing of the Sedition Bill. The alterations in the law are mostly of a verbal nature and the agitation against the measure relates chiefly to these verbal alterations. The terms used in the law are English, and they have not yet been translated by a qualified translator. This being the case, we do not like to translate the phraseology of the law according to our ability and inclination and parade our learning by criticising the verbal alterations. To tell the truth, we have no sympathy with the principle on which the agitation against the measure is being carried on.

It is our firm conviction that there is no sedition in this country; that in fact, no such feeling against the Government can thrive in Indian atmosphere. We have full sympathy with the opponents of the measure so far, but no further. We cannot admit that an amendment of the Sedition Law was not at all necessary. It is true that sedition is not among the faults of the Indian press, but there is no gainsaying the fact that it suffers from many besetting faults and scandalous defects. There are many vernacular papers which have to make a show and a display in order to ensure a large sale. The average native reader appreciates a Punch-and-Judy show better than cultured and erudite writings. To flatter the low and vitiated tastes of the reader, many a native journalist has to sacrifice his conscience on the altar of selfishness and try reprehensible methods to keep his readers in humour. This is the reason why libel cases have become so numerous of late and why there are lapses at every step in the press criticism of the Government measures. The man who will be most annoyed by any criticism of his own conduct, does not hesitate to unfairly criticise the conduct of others. The man who ought to be most grateful to the Government for favour and protection cannot resist the temptation of writing strongly against it. National degradation and misery are the inevitable consequences of this.

On this ground, if not on any other, we think that the law required an amendment. Time alone will show whether the new law will serve our purpose or defeat its own object by depriving the press of its legitimate liberty. As for ourselves, we do not fear that the law will interfere with the liberty of the press. Nay, we believe that it will improve the tone of the press and correct its tastes. If there is, as is alleged by the Government, sedition in the country, the new law will root it out to the great satisfaction of all loyal people. If not, the law will remain a dead letter. Why, then, this panic at the passing of the law? We see nothing objectionable in the passing of the law. All that we want the Government to do is to so manage things that an erring journalist may not be punished under the law with unjust and unnecessary severity. There is no sedition in the country; but the English education has turned the heads of many people, and they have learnt like a parrot to sing many objectionable notes which they have got by heart. A reprimand, a slight chastisement will be enough to correct the ways of these people, and it will be unnecessary as well as improper to condemn them to life-long confinement. If the law is enforced with proper care and moderation, it will no doubt improve the tone of the press and raise its status.

BANGAVASI,
Feb. 26th, 1898.

43. The *Bangavasi* of the 26th February thus comments upon the passing of the Sedition Bill:—

The passing of the Sedition Bill. We must render unquestioning obedience to a law passed by the Government, and it does not matter whether we consider it to be a good or a bad law, whether we can or cannot clearly understand its meaning. It is not necessary to make a hair-splitting interpretation of the law or to rigidly draw the limit which we must not, under it, transgress in our criticism of the policy and measures of the Government. We shall be beyond the reach of danger if we do not trespass upon forbidden ground, and if we forbear going near the place which we are forbidden by the law to enter. It is not advisable for anyone, in any country, and at any time, to talk incoherently or

impertinently. But we Hindus not infrequently talk nonsense, because the law prohibiting such incoherent talk has so long been not explicit, and because we do not obey the dictates of our *Sastras*. We shall have henceforward to be more cautious. We shall have to weigh every word, judge its propriety and necessity before we speak or write it. The law will now do what the *Sastras* have failed to do: it will prevent us from committing a serious offence. Why should we call such a law bad? The law is not objectionable.

In the opinion of the Hindu *Sastras* it is a sin to express oneself in harsh, deceitful or incoherent language, or in language full of falsehood. The speaking of anything and everything in season and out of season is also condemned. We shall never run the risk of being entangled in the meshes of the law, if we always try our best to keep our speech and writing free from defects above mentioned. We must now control our speech, curb our tongue, and be more sober in our writing. We hope that the law will do us, degraded as we are, incalculable good. If we transgress the law and have to pay a penalty for the transgression, that will do us good, as the atonement for a sin is always sure to do good to the sinner. The practice of *prayaschitta* (atonement) is gradually going out of use in this country, and sin and iniquity are in full swing. We were once the most exalted of all nations, but we are now the most degraded. We must repent at every step; we must sincerely atone for our sins. The Sedition Law, controlling, as it does, our speech, will do us immense good in this respect. It will do good to those who will be forewarned and act more cautiously in future. It will also do good to those who will not mind the warning and will be punished for transgressing the law. We must anyhow learn control of speech.

But do not think that control of speech has become necessary for those alone who *write* for the press. It has become also necessary for those who *talk* incoherently and amiss. There are three and only three things which constitute humanity. These are the body, the mind, and the speech of a human being. If the Sedition Law can correct and purify our tongue, it will make the purification of the mind and the body quite easy. The law to control the speech has been passed. Let us try to purify our mind and body before a law for their purification is passed.

Our cities and towns are sunk in the lowest depth of degradation, but our villages still remain uncontaminated. We newspaper writers had so long been sowing broadcast in the peaceful villages the seeds of poison which is propagating itself in the towns. It will be for our good as well as for the good of the village population if the law under notice can prevent us from poisoning their minds. Let a newspaper writer discover a flaw, however small, in the conduct of a Government servant and he will at once make capital out of it in his paper. The presumptuous journalist will solve, with a dash of his pen, an intricate problem of administration which even the Viceroy and his Council have failed to solve. And this presumptuous journalist, mind you, is oftener than not a man who has no stake in the country, who lives from hand to mouth, who is innocent of law and to whom the *sastras* are, so to speak, forbidden food, who is, in short, responsible neither to himself nor to any body else for his actions. The average newspaper reader is not a whit better than the newspaper writer. If the law can remove this state of things we will not only not complain of its rigour, but will rather bless the authorities who have passed it.

The law has not prohibited newspaper-writing. It has not put a stop to the publication of correct information, it has not prevented us from promoting the welfare of our society. All that the law will do will be to prevent us from concerning ourselves about objects with which we have nothing to do. It will only curb the glib tongue of our platform speakers and control their speech. This is all right. It will be for our immense good if we now learn to give up tall talk and do substantial work. Let us give up politics and devote ourselves to the doing of public good.

The *Statesman* and the *Englishman* have strongly commented upon the Sedition Bill after it has become law. Many of our Calcutta subscribers have asked us whether the articles published in these papers *anent* the passing of the sedition law are or are not seditious. We confess our inability to answer this question satisfactorily. To tell the truth, we have not yet been able to know

what sedition is. We were so long under the impression that love and affection give one the privilege of saying even unkind words with impunity in a moment of irritation. To one whom we love and respect, to one, that is, to whom we must unburden our mind and lay bare our hearts we cannot but say unkind words now and then. The Government is our sole refuge and protection, and we cannot but lay our grievances before it. With this impression in our mind we so long did not even hesitate to speak of the Government just as we pleased. We now see that we were wrong in doing so. Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh, and one cannot be strictly coherent in his speech when one has to give vent to pent-up sorrow and grief. The new sedition law will teach us to patiently bear up under misery and suffer without complaint. This practice of patience will no doubt do us good.

But there is one thing to be taken into consideration. The application of the law will be at the discretion of the Government and it will not be enforced as other laws are. If you commit theft you shall be sent to jail. If you commit murder you shall be hanged. But not so in the case of sedition. If you commit that crime you may or may not be punished. You will be punished if the Government wishes to punish you. You will not be punished if the Government does not wish to punish you. The law will be treated as a powerful weapon in the state armoury to be used on rare occasions. This is not as it should be. So far as journalism is concerned, we are but novices. We are blind imitators of European journalists. A little indulgence spoils us, a little patting on the back makes us forget our true position. Let us suppose that a sweet-tempered Viceroy lightly treats our foolish writings and gives us indulgence. This is sure to make us self-forgetful and, in consequence, as free in speech and writing as possible. A bad habit is thus formed, which is sure to go against us when the sweet-tempered Viceroy is succeeded by a stern and *zabardust* Viceroy.

To tell the truth, when we see our Anglo-Indian contemporaries strongly criticising Government measures and making cutting and condemnatory remarks upon Government officials we feel an almost irresistible inclination to emulate their conduct. Not that we have any desire to vilify the Government, but that we feel an almost uncontrollable desire to imitate Englishmen in all respects. We dress like an Englishman, we speak like an Englishman; why should we not also write a newspaper like an Englishman? The new sedition law will, however, be an obstacle in the way of our fully imitating European methods.

BANGAVARI,
Feb. 26th, 1898.

44. Referring to the conviction of a German editor for publishing a cartoon on a speech of the German Emperor, the same paper observes that when an inhabitant of a free country can be punished in this way Lord Elgin has done nothing strange or unnatural by passing the sedition law. If the warlike Germans can live happily under a rigorous sedition law why should not the people of a subject country live happily under a similar law?

DAINIK-O-SAMACHAR
CHANDRIKA,
Feb. 28th, 1898.

45. The *Dainik-o-Samachar Chandrika* of the 28th February says that protests against the proposed Calcutta Municipal Bill would be useless even if protest were not rendered impossible. In the case of this Municipal Law, the same line has been followed as has been done in the case of the Penal Code Amendment Bill, the Criminal Procedure Bill, and the Post Office Bill. The Lieutenant-Governor has held out hopes that neither the franchise nor the numerical strength of the Corporation will be interfered with. Yes, but there will be only this difference that the future Commissioners will be mere puppets. Of course, there can be no objection so long as the Commissioners are allowed to retain their Commissionerships. It is also intended to effect improvements in Calcutta similar to those which have been proposed for Bombay. The writer's sole concern is about taxes. He suffers who has to pay.

TRIPURA HITAIISHI,
Second fortnight of
Magh, 1304B.S.

46. With a majority of votes, writes the *Tripura Hitaishi*, for the second fortnight of *Magh*, 1304B.S., Babu Jatra Mohan Sen has been elected to represent the Chittagong Division in the Bengal Legislative Council. But the election has not yet been notified in the *Calcutta Gazette* after receiving confirmation by the Local Government. The application of Babu Nityananda

Roy against the election of either Babu Jatra Moban or Rai Mohini Mohan Burdhan Bahadur was submitted by the Divisional Commissioner to the Local Government without any remarks of his own; and it has now been sent back to him for his opinion. The Commissioner in his turn has asked Mr. Anderson, the District Magistrate, to report on the truth or otherwise of the allegations made by Babu Nityananda Roy. It is, however, a matter of speculation whether Mr. Anderson will be able to find out the truth, and whether he is fit to hold the enquiry, inasmuch as shortly before the election of the municipal representative, towards the close of December last, he gave a certificate to Nityananda Babu. There is no denying that if Mr. Anderson be not a supporter of Nityananda Babu's candidature, he is at least a well-wisher of the latter. It would, therefore, have been better if the enquiry had been made by the Commissioner himself.

VI.—MISCELLANEOUS.

47. The *Darussaltanat* and *Urdu Guide* of the 17th February has the following:—

The Anglo-Indian and the native press.

Which of the two sections of the Indian press is more serviceable to the Government, the native

or the Anglo-Indian?

The native press, although it is considered by the Government to speak nothing but falsehoods, has always felt it its bounden duty to keep the Government well informed as regards the country's wants, whilst the Anglo-Indian press, which is taken by Government to be the true representative of the Indian people, speaks nothing but falsehoods. It is true that the Sedition Law makes no distinction of colour or creed, but it can be said without hesitation that it is the native press alone which will be oppressed under the new law which is more stringent than the old, and that the Anglo-Indian press will make it its principal duty to get that press either severely punished or completely suppressed. The native press, however, is quite satisfied that it has hitherto done its duty by the Government and the people, though it has been rewarded by the Government for its trouble with a more rigorous Sedition Law. The Anglo-Indian press has no sympathy with the natives, and is ignorant of their manners, customs, and languages. It, therefore, misrepresents them before the Government, and misinterprets their feelings—conduct by which ill-feeling is created between the rulers and the ruled. As a matter of fact, in all questions affecting the native community, the Anglo-Indian press fails to keep the Government in the right path. So far as the people, therefore, are concerned, the Anglo-Indian press is worthless and dangerous. It always misleads the Government, because, being a staunch supporter of the official class, it always conceals their wrong doings. It is the native press and the native press alone which boldly expostulates with the officials for their vagaries and keeps the Government informed of any disaffection which such vagaries may have caused among the people.

DARUSSALTANAT
AND URDU GUIDE,
Feb. 17th, 1898.

48. The *Burdwan Sanjivani* of the 22nd February says that to the Indian both the Liberals and the Conservatives are the same. Whenever the interests of England clash

India and Parliament.

with those of India the English representatives will surely consult their own interests first; and no sane man can blame them for this; as self defence is a prime virtue. Indeed, the wise call them foolish who, before protecting themselves, go to protect others. Again, if the English representatives were not to look to the interests of England what would their constituents say? In Parliament, therefore, the members have always to consult English interests first. Thus whether the Liberals are in power or the Conservatives, there can be no change in the condition of India. It is, after all, a faint hope that a few friends of India in Parliament will be able to achieve any appreciable good.

BURDWAN SANJIVANI,
Feb. 22nd, 1898.

49. The *Hitavadi* of the 25th February writes as follows:—

The probable effects of the Sedition Law.

The Secretary of State has declared that Government does not wish to restrict the freedom of the Indian press: we have many times heard such statements from the officials here. But whatever the object of the authorities may be, there can be no doubt that their action has destroyed the liberty of the press. The way in which we were repressed in the Legislative Council

HITAVADI,
Feb. 25th, 1898.

after we were gagged has perfectly confounded us. To use the language of the Lieutenant-Governor, so menacing are the movements of the beaks and claws of the eagles that there will be nothing to be surprised at if the hearts of the jays are torn open in a moment. It is a matter of regret that the people of England will not be able to pierce the cloak of plain official words and learn our true condition.

There is, it is true, no disaffection in this country. But we cannot hope that such a severe law will not produce disaffection here. When people will not understand the object or operation of any measure of Government they will be obliged to conceal this discontent, and, feeling how powerless they are to obtain a redress of their grievances, will now call on God and now heave a sigh. If things ever come to such a pass it will be very lamentable indeed. There will be no end to the distress of the people.

The officials, we know, think differently on this point. We, however, let the officials know what we think. We know that the officials have a far better means of learning and understanding things. But if they had only considered that as natives of this country we were in a position to know something of its condition and listened to our representations, this lamentable law would not have been passed.

What is done is done and we must now seek a redress of the evil. Redress is not to be looked for from the officials here. The only hope of redress lies in an agitation in England. Few journalists will have the courage to criticise public measures with imprisonment or transportation for life staring them in the face. The country is likely to be ruined under these circumstances.

HIPAVADI,
Feb. 25th, 1898.

50. A correspondent of the same paper complains that the causes of the poverty of the Sonthals are to be found in the disadvantageous barter which these simple people, unacquainted with the value of articles, make with unscrupulous up-country shop-keepers, in the agricultural services which they have to render free of charge to the money-lenders, and in their practice of bartering paddy for liquor against the law.

SANJIVANI,
Feb. 26th, 1898.

51. A Dibrugarh correspondent sends to the *Sanjivani* of the 26th February the following particulars of fraudulent cooly-recruiting. Several women of village Sanua, thana Chakradharpur, district Chaibassa, came to Howrah on the occasion of the last eclipse to have a dip in the Ganges, under the escort of two men of their village. On the way they met a man who had resided at Sanua for several years and was then staying at Nagpur. He promised to take them to a better ghât than that at Howrah, which, he said, had been much damaged by the recent earthquake. The party agreed without hesitation, as the man was no stranger to them; but instead of being taken to a ghât in Calcutta they were sent by rail to Goalundo to be thence shipped to Assam. The man disembarked somewhere near Dhubri and made himself scarce with the purses, clothes, &c., of the wretches whom he had victimised. Then the truth became known to the women that they were being sent as agreement coolies under a contract for four years.

The correspondent enquired of the party why they had signed the contract if they had no inclination to serve as coolies, to which they reported by saying that neither at Dhubri nor at any other point on the journey did they sign any bond or appear before a European.

DAINIK-O-SAMACHAR
CHANDRIKA,
Feb. 27th, 1898.

52. The *Dainik-o-Samachar Chandrika* of the 27th February writes as follows with reference to the defeat of Mr. Samuel Smith's motion that England should make a contribution towards the cost of the frontier expedition:—

The Conservative Ministry will act as they please so long as they have a preponderating majority of votes on their side. Blindly led by the Conservative Ministry, the Government of India, too, will go on acting arbitrarily, and there will be nothing to prevent it from passing measures like the Sedition Bill by the thousand, and measures like the Criminal Procedure Bill by the lakh. We are compelled to say that nothing but an increase of Liberal votes in Parliament will save us.

53. The *Dainik-o-Samachar Chandrika* of the 27th February writes as follows with reference to the trial of Zola:—

DAINIK-O-SAMACHAR,
CHANDRIKA,
Feb. 27th, 1898.

Zila and Tilak.

The French public are jubilant over the conviction of Zola. In its political aspect the trial of Zola bears a striking resemblance to the trial of Tilak. During the trial of Tilak the Anglo-Indian community of Bombay conducted themselves just as the French public have done during the recent trial of Zola. The conviction of Tilak made the Bombay Anglo-Indians dance in joy, so to speak. In the opinion of the English press the conviction of Zola means the triumph of the military over the civilian power in France. In this country the conviction of Tilak meant the triumph of the executive power, civil as well as military. The trial of Zola had a political significance. His acquittal would have certainly brought about the fall of the French Ministry. No such political catastrophe was, however, apprehended from the acquittal of Tilak. In this respect there is a great difference between the trial of Zola and the trial of Tilak.

ASSAM PAPERS.

54. The *Silchar* for the first fortnight of February considers it absolutely

Educational matters in Assam.

necessary that all old Sub-Inspectors and Deputy Inspectors of Schools in Assam, whose education is of an old and antiquated order, should be made to retire, making room for young and energetic men, like Pandit Padma Nath Vidyabinod, who are educated on the modern system. The writer also draws attention to the jobbery which is practised by the head clerk of the Director of Public Instruction, who gives away all examinerships at the disposal of the Director to his own friends and relatives in the Education Department, to the exclusion of others who are equally well entitled to them. Poorly paid as the teachers are, it proves a great hardship to them to be deprived of even this single means of eking out their poor income. Babu Kanti Chandra, the third teacher in the Zilla School, being a brother of Sashi Babu, the Director's head clerk, seems to be specially favoured by him. As a teacher of a High School, he may be appointed an examiner in the examinations of the middle schools, but he ought not to have been appointed an examiner for the Lower Primary Examinations, which should be conducted entirely by middle school teachers.

SILCHAR,
First fortnight of
Feb. 1898.

One also fails to see why a wretched book like the "Saubhagya Sopan" has been kept a text-book for the middle school examinations for so many years when many better books are available.

The writer, in conclusion, hopes that on the retirement of Babu Jagad-bandhu Sen, Sub-Inspector of Schools, Babu Gopi Charan Datta will be appointed to succeed him.

NARAYAN CHANDRA BHATTACHARYYA,

Offg. Bengali Translator.

BENGALI TRANSLATOR'S OFFICE,

The 5th March 1898.

